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Strangers on a Train

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Chapter 1 by Shreyash Ganage

There's a problem with people who think a lot. They often tend to over - analyse things and jump to conclusions way before things actually get there. While this could be helpful sometimes, often it is the most effective way to crush one's own expectations. This is quite similar to what happens with the optimists. The optimists always see the good in everything. It's the light that catches their eye because they don't believe in darkness. So when there's a dark pit in the way, it is the optimists who fall the hardest. Well, I think a lot and she was an optimist.

I met her on a train. She sat across me looking like the only thing that was new in that faded compartment. She was beautiful, in a way almost surreal. For a moment I thought I had seen her somewhere, the deodorant commercial maybe. I quipped out of curiosity " Do you work in tv commercials ?". "No", she said, taken aback by a stranger's audacity. But then she noticed something that changed her perception of me from an interfering jerk to an honestly curious gentleman; she saw the belt around my neck. She smiled with sympathy, almost as if she was the one responsible for my broken neck.

You see, this is how sympathy works. It makes people think good of you because you already suffered something bad. And this works wonders with the optimists because all they can see is good. Well, sympathy made her do something I had been waiting for all along. She asked the obvious "How did this happen ?". This one I had been practicing for months now. I narrated the entire bike accident with sheer conviction. Told her how I was making a turn and slammed into a tempo coming the wrong way, she bought it. We had now moved past the "strangers" phase.

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hollywood to tv series, from tv series to the next episode's spoilers until the night went dark and people wanted us to shut up.

I was so hopeful about this, even compared ourselves to the characters from Jab We Met. I thanked God for the accident and the broken neck, finally it was about to do some good to me. I went to sleep thinking of the things we could talk about tomorrow. Next morning we had tea together. Her station was just a few hours away now. While I tried to keep her intrigued with all the stuff I had thought last night, at the back of my mind a tug of war had started. A bold part of me wanted me to get her number while the shy part thought it was would seem too cheap. Finally the shy part yielded to the boldness and I decided to ask her number. As the train reached her station, she got down. I helped her with her bags. Handing her the last brown briefcase I said...

You..Your number ?

She smiled. A bright light hit my eyes.

Her lips moved to some digits but all I could hear was a monitor beeping. As I tried to lift myself up a sharp pain rushed through my spine, a nurse came running by.

Pushing me back down to the bed she said, "Stay down sir, you don't want to hurt that broken neck."

Train..Where's the train ? I was on a train.

Train ? You were in a bike accident sir, broke your neck. You were given a heavy dose of sedatives to help with the pain. Don't worry, such lucid dreams are common in a state of trauma.

Damn sedatives.

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